

XXI.—Recent Ornithological Publications.

1. ENGLISH.

IN the course of the past year, Mr. Gould has published the Sixteenth part of his 'Birds of Asia,' which he has solely devoted to the illustration of the ornithology of the island of Formosa; where, as the readers of this journal already know, Mr. Swinhoe has been so successfully working. We only wish that a portion of that gentleman's zeal for the promotion of Natural History animated other members of Her Majesty's Consular Service; though it is not to be expected that many of them would find a field so rich and so unexplored as our friend has done in the "Beautiful" island where he performs his official duties. Mr. Swinhoe has, in a former volume of the 'Ibis,' so well described the characteristic features of Formosan Ornithology, that we need only refer to his three masterly articles on that subject (*Ibis*, 1863, pp. 198, 250, and 377). Mr. Gould gives figures of the following sixteen birds:—

<i>Urocissa cærulea.</i>	<i>Myiophoneus insularis.</i>
<i>Euplocomus swinhoii.</i>	<i>Megalæma nuchalis.</i>
<i>Bambusicola sonorivox.</i>	<i>Pericrocotus griseogularis.</i>
<i>Pomatorhinus erythrocnemis.</i>	<i>Garrulus taivanus.</i>
<i>Gecinus tancola.</i>	<i>Numenius rufescens.</i>
<i>Picus insularis.</i>	<i>Hypsipetes nigerrima.</i>
<i>Garrulax ruficeps.</i>	<i>Parus castaneiventris.</i>
— <i>pœcilorhyncha.</i>	<i>Alcippe brunnea.</i>

All these species were described by Mr. Gould in the Zoological Society's 'Proceedings' for 1862 (pp. 280–286), but they were all discovered by Mr. Swinhoe's unassisted labours.

It is not often that we are favoured with an ornithological paper in the publications of the Linnean Society. Since the appearance, some seven or eight years ago, of that remarkable one on the "Geographical Distribution of the class *Aves*"—the truth of the principles enunciated in which has been so unanimously admitted, and which has placed the important branch of the science to which it related on a basis as sure as it was novel—we can hardly call any others to mind. Dr. John Shortt's "Account of a Heronry and Breeding-place of other Water-birds

in Southern India", however, occupies a few pages in the last number of the 'Journal of the Proceedings' (vol. viii. p. 94) of this venerable body. Finding an *Ibis* mentioned, we naturally were curious to hear news of our relatives in Madras. The species being called in the text *Ibis falcinellus*—which a foot-note considerably informs us is a synonym of "*Falcinellus igneus*, Gould"—we were somewhat surprised as we read on to find its eggs described as being "of a dirty-white colour." Aberration in the appearance of eggs being, however, an article of our creed, we were inclined to let this pass; but the next few words enlightened us—"The birds are white, with black head, feet, and neck, and have a long curved black bill. The head and neck are naked," &c. It was plain that here was a case of mistaken identity. Instead of our "Glossy" relative, the Indian representative of our own "Religious" selves, *Ibis melanocephala*, was obviously intended. Now, we have no complaint to make against Dr. Shortt. In March 1864, when he last visited the "Hunter's Rest," we believe Dr. Jerdon's Third volume was unpublished; and though, even accidentally, to mistake one *Ibis* for another is a most serious offence, it is not an unpardonable crime in one who has no sources of information at hand; but surely we have a right to ask the Council of the Linnean Society, who, we believe, still keep up the old system of referring to some person or persons all papers intended for the Society's publications, to whom was Dr. Shortt's paper submitted? Another most grotesque error in the same article is printing *Graculus siennensis* for *G. sinensis*!

We are indebted to Mr. J. B. Rowe for a copy of a list of Devonshire Birds*, which he has drawn up. The author mentions that five-and-twenty years having elapsed since the publication of a list of the birds of that county, he has ventured to undertake the task, in the compilation of which he has had the valuable assistance of Mr. Gatcombe, a gentleman well known to ornithologists. The last list of Devonshire birds, and the one to which Mr. Rowe alludes, is that of Dr. Moore, in Charlesworth's 'Magazine of Natural History' for 1837. Of course since

* A Catalogue of the Mammals, Birds, Reptiles, and Amphibians indigenous to or observed in the county of Devon. By J. Brooking Rowe, F.L.S., &c. Plymouth: 1863. (London, Van Voorst.)

that time many changes have been wrought in the physical appearance of the county, which have had a corresponding effect upon its *Ornis*. Devonshire was the county of Montagu, and, for this reason alone, its birds would possess an interest in the eyes of ornithologists; but it is also by nature so favourably situated as hardly to require such a recommendation to the modern and severer school of bird-students. Mr. Rowe enumerates no less than 268 species as having occurred within its borders—a very large number, it is true, but perhaps not more than might be expected when we take into consideration its great extent of coast-line. This number, however, we think, might be slightly reduced. We should hardly have thought that *Picus martius* and *Lagopus rupestris* (*lege mutus*) had any right to be included as Devonian species. The same, though on different grounds, may be said of *Chenopsis atratus*; and *Crex foljambii* is, of course, only a synonym for *C. minuta*. On the other hand, among the rarities which seem to have a rightful claim to admission, are *Aquila nœvia*, *Melanocorypha calandra*—recorded as British for the first time—*Chræcocephalus ichthyaetus* and *Alca impennis*. The Calandra Lark was discovered in the collection of a bird-preserver at Plymouth, and upon inquiry was found to have been obtained in that neighbourhood, while it “was supposed by its possessor to be a specimen of the Shore-Lark.” We did not know before that *Lagopus scoticus* ever extended its range so far to the south as Dartmoor; but, as only two examples are mentioned as having been obtained, we suppose its occurrence is merely accidental. We regret to find that *Circus cineraceus*, a bird which ought to possess an especial interest with the worthies of Devon, is characterized as being “very scarce.” *Tetrao urogallus* is, of course, an oversight for *T. tetrix*.

We think the few pages on the ‘Birds of Harrow,’ communicated by the Messrs. Bridgeman to a recently published work on the Botany of that neighbourhood*, deserve a passing notice in this Journal, as being, so far as we are aware, the first attempt

* The Flora of Harrow. By J. C. Melvill. With notices of the Birds of the neighbourhood, by the Hon. F. C. Bridgeman, and the Hon. G. O. M. Bridgeman. London: 1864 (Longmans).

of the kind made by the boys of any of our Public Schools. We welcome this little list as an earnest of what may be hoped for from the rising generation, and with the greatest cordiality congratulate its authors on their auspicious essay.

In a note (E) appended to the second edition of Mr. G. A. Rowell's pamphlet 'On the Beneficent Distribution of the Sense of Pain'*, that gentleman inserts an abstract of a paper read before the Ashmolean Society of Oxford, and intended to show that Mr. Darwin's great theory fails to account for the peculiar instinct which leads the Cuckoo to lay her eggs in the nests of other birds. We desire here merely to call the attention of our readers to Mr. Rowell's publication, and will only remark that the parasitic habits of *Cuculus canorus* are not more inexplicable than the parasitic habits of other animals. It is the isolation of the circumstance (as regards British Birds) which makes it seem so unintelligibly strange to those persons whose acquaintance with ornithology is limited to the species inhabiting this country. The power of fascination successfully exercised by the Cuckoo appears to us, like other cases of fascination, much harder to be accounted for on Darwinian principles.

2. FRENCH.

For some reason or other there is a dearth of new ornithological publications in France. In our last Number we could not find one work to notice, for nothing seems to have been recently hatched. Are our lively neighbours engaged in an incubation which will end in a grand *coup d'éclosion*, or what? The countrymen of Buffon and Brisson, Savigny and Vieillot, Lesson and Prince Charles-Lucien—it would be easy to continue the illustrious list—are surely not tired of ornithology? We must fall back upon our respected contemporary, the 'Revue et Magasin de Zoologie,' in this our time of scarcity; and yet its pages for the past year do not offer an over-abundant supply of sustenance to the ornithological reviewer always craving for fresh food. M. Marchand supplies a series of figures (which, though rather

* London: 1862 (Williams and Norgate), 8vo, p. 61.

coarsely drawn, are not without merit) of nestling-birds, to illustrate the branch of our science to which he is devoting himself, as formerly noticed in this Journal (*Ibis*, 1863, p. 355), and also continues (pp. 3, 33, and 378) his catalogue of the birds observed in the Department of Eure-et-Loir. M. Coinde has a note (p. 5) on insectivorous birds, showing that many of the *Scolopacidae* are great benefactors to mankind. M. Fatio (p. 65) makes some observations on the reproductive organs of *Accentor alpinus*. The same gentleman has also an article (p. 122) on the appearance of *Syrnhaptes paradoxus* in Europe; in the course of which he states that two specimens were killed near Geneva towards the end of August 1863; while to this the Editor appends a notice, by M. Ernest de Sauley, of two more examples, “d’une beauté remarquable,” killed at Hauconcourt, near Metz, on the 9th of February, 1864—being the latest date of the occurrence of this persecuted species that we are aware of. There is also a translation (p. 97), by M. Alphonse Gaillard, of a portion of Conservator Meves’s “Contribution to the Ornithology of Jemtland,” mentioned in the ‘*Ibis*’ for 1862 (p. 182), containing the descriptions of some five-and-twenty young birds, which will be highly useful to those who cannot read them in the original. M. Althammer records some facts (p. 366) relating to a pair of *Melopsittacus undulatus*, which escaped from confinement in the Tyrol, in April 1862, and which seem not only to have passed the two following winters among the mountains, but also to have bred there. The Baron H. Aucapitaine gives an account (p. 409), apparently on unquestionable authority, of an aged Macaw, “Aracanga”—quære *Ara macao* (Linn.)?—which was brought from Spanish America in the year 1799 or 1800, and, though quite blind, was still living on the 5th of October last in Corsica, with Madame Grassi, its owner. The longevity of the *Psittacidae* in confinement is pretty well known; but many of our readers may not be aware that the “oldest inhabitant” of the Regent’s Park Gardens is an example of *Coracopsis vasa*, which was presented to the Zoological Society on the 12th June, 1827, and formed the subject of an article by Mr. Vigors in the ‘*Zoological Journal*’ for the same year (vol. iii. p. 240)!

3. ITALIAN.

We hail the appearance of Count Salvadori's 'Catalogue of the Birds of Sardinia'* as a real and most valuable acquisition to our knowledge of European ornithology. The writer is evidently not only well "posted-up" in his subject generally, but appears to be a most accurate field-naturalist, and, we should imagine, also a good sportsman. His rectification of Signor Cara's mistakes is itself a benefit to science, and we hope we may hereafter enrol him among the list of our contributors. The absence of *Alauda cristata* from Sardinia is certainly a very remarkable fact—far more so even than the curious circumstance of its non-occurrence on the north side of the Straits of Dover, while it is so plentiful between Calais and Boulogne. We particularly commend to our readers' attention Count Salvadori's account of *Sturnus unicolor*, which a friend of ours, who has made three visits to the island, assures us he can confirm in every particular; and, in conclusion, we can only say that we hope each country in Europe may at no distant time possess an ornithologist so conscientious as the one whose work we are noticing.

4. GERMAN.

No doubt many of our readers who are egg-collectors possess in their cabinets specimens inscribed "Zeleb." followed by certain mystic characters indicating a date; but perhaps few of them know that they owe these specimens to Herr Johann Zelebor, a Conservator of the Imperial and Royal Museum at Vienna, a naturalist who several years ago made a journey to the south-eastern frontiers of the Austrian dominions, where he reaped a rich oological harvest. Since then we have heard of him as being one of the members of the celebrated 'Novara' expedition; and in 1863 he performed another "Acquisitions-Reise" to the Theiss and Lower Danube, an account of which appears in the numbers of the Vienna 'Jagd-Zeitung' for last year. The principal object of this journey seems to have been to procure living examples of various animals for the Emperor's menagerie

* Catalogo degli Uccelli di Sardegna, con note e osservazioni di Tommaso Salvadori. Atti della Società Italiana di scienze naturali, vol. vi. Milano: 1864.

at Schönbrunn ; but the series of letters recording his progress, which he has addressed to the Editor of the periodical we have named, contains some interesting facts relating to the private life of several rare European birds—*Accipitres*, *Grallæ*, and *Anseres*. The abundance of some of these species is shown by his captures. In the mountains of Fruska-Gora he obtained, among other live birds, nine Imperial Eagles (*Aquila mogilnik*), and seven Lanners (*Falco lanarius*), besides one Saker (*F. sacer*). Midway between Tultscha and Ismail he found a large breeding-place of various Herons, including *Ardea garzetta* and *A. comata*, with *Falcinellus igneus* and *Carbo pygmaeus*. The “pearl of the swamp-birds,” *Ardea egretta*, is not so sociable as its allies, and breeds far in the marshes, where the reeds are thickest and highest ; nevertheless Herr Zelebor obtained seventeen examples of it, all in the fullest beauty. The Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*) appears to breed here also, and he procured ten Cygnets in their downy plumage. A more scientific account of his spoils will be found in the ‘Journal für Ornithologie’ for last year (pp. 69–74), from the pen of Herr A. von Pelzeln. Surely his success should tempt some member of the B. O. U. to visit a country so interesting, so accessible, and so little known to ornithologists !

5. DANISH.

We have received from Herr Fischer, of Copenhagen, copies of two short papers which he has published on the breeding of the Nutcracker (*Nucifraga caryocatactes*)*. As that gentleman, however, with the greatest liberality has also entrusted us with the nest and four specimens of this bird’s eggs, we have thought it due to his courtesy to exhibit them at a meeting of the Zoological Society. They were taken on the 23rd of March, 1864, on the island of Bornholm—the same locality whence the nest and nestling formerly exhibited to the Zoological Society (P. Z. S. 1862, p. 206) were obtained. The account which our friend

* Yderligere Bidrag til Nøddekrigens Ynglehistorie. Ved J. C. H. Fischer. Kröyers Tidsskrift, 3. R. 2. B. 1863.

Ægget af Nøddekrigen (*Caryocatactes guttatus*). Ved J. C. H. Fischer. Kröyers Tidsskrift, 3. R. 3. B. 1864.

gives us of the nidification of this species agrees very fairly with that published in 1862 by Herr E. Schütt, as observed by him in the Duchy of Baden, and reprinted in a former volume of this Journal (*Ibis*, 1862, p. 365). The eggs sent us by Herr Fischer are very lightly spotted, but it is quite likely that better-marked specimens will be procured. One or more of them, however, will be figured in the Zoological 'Proceedings' for the present year; so that it is unnecessary for us to insert a particular description of them here.

6. SWEDISH AND NORWEGIAN.

To Mr. Malmgren's 'Notes on the Bird-Fauna of Spitsbergen,' reference has been already made in the present number (*antea*, p. 200); and as the continuation of that article will include a more precise criticism of this gentleman's excellent paper, we need not anticipate our own remarks upon it.

We have lately had the opportunity of perusing Mr. Collett's 'Review of the Ornithological Fauna of the Neighbourhood of Christiania',* a book which cannot but be useful to the many English travellers, capable of understanding Norsk, who yearly pass through the modern capital of Norway, and all of whom consider it more or less "the right thing" to profess an interest in the ornithology of the wild country they are visiting. The writer has evidently studied his subject with great care and diligence, both in the field and in the museum. He also acknowledges the assistance he has received from Professors Esmark and Rasch, of the University of Christiania. But all this has not prevented him from falling into a few important errors: amongst others, he mentions the occurrence of *Syrnhaptēs paradoxus* in Norway in both 1861 and 1862, whereas 1863 was the year of the great irruption, and we have been unable to hear of its occurrence in that country previously. Mr. Collett tells us that the list of birds observed in Norway comprises 244 species; and of these, 220 have been noticed as occurring, and 169 as breeding, in the Christiania district, which, by his definition,

* Oversight af Christiania Omegns Ornithologiske Fauna. Af Robert Collett, Stud. juris. *Nyt Magazin for Naturvidenskaberne Physiographiske Forening*, B. iii., H. 3. Christiania: 1864.

includes a circle described by a radius of about eighteen English miles from that town. The book is altogether an interesting one, and will be especially so to tourists in Norway who desire to pursue ornithology. To such we accordingly recommend its study, being confident that they will derive more information from it than from several other works of much greater pretension that have been recently published.

7. RUSSIAN.

We have been much disappointed to find that Professor von Baer's article in the St. Petersburg 'Bulletins'*, on the extinction of *Alca impennis*, in continuation of the series of papers on extirpated animals commenced by him in the same publication, is simply a translation into German of part of Professor Steenstrup's well-known and valuable monograph of that bird. Not a single new fact is added, nor is a single new deduction drawn from the old ones, as given by the illustrious naturalist last named. To our German brethren, who disapprove of the use of the Danish language, Professor von Baer's paper will be a boon; but we are somewhat surprised to find the Imperial Academy of the Russian capital sanctioning the publication of a mere translation in their 'Transactions.'

8. AMERICAN.

Mr. D. G. Elliot's new work†, which has now reached its second number, is a book on a scale corresponding to the 'Monograph of the Genus *Pitta*' by the same author, with which most of our readers are acquainted: it contains full-sized coloured representations of every species of the group in question, drawn by the author, and accompanied by descriptive letter-press. In the First part are figured—

* Ueber das Aussterben der Thierarten in physiologischer und nicht physiologischer Hinsicht überhaupt u. s. w. Von K. E. von Baer. Zweite Hälfte, erste Abtheilung.—Bulletin de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences de St. Pétersbourg, vol. vi. p. 514.

† A Monograph of the *Tetraoninae*, or Family of the Grouse. By Daniel G. Elliot, F.Z.S. New York: published by the Author, No. 27 West Thirty-third Street. (London: Williams and Norgate.) Imperial folio.

Bonasa sabinii.	Pediœetes phasianellus.
Canace canadensis.	Bonasa sylvestris.
Lyrurus tetrix.	Lagopus scoticus.

While the Second part supplies illustrations of

Centrocerus urophasianus.	Canace franklini.
Dendragapus obscurus.	Bonasa umbelloides.
Pediœetes columbianus.	Lagopus leucurus.

Some of these generic names may be new to our readers ; we may therefore refer them to Mr. Elliot's paper in last year's 'Proceedings of the Philadelphia Academy' (p. 23) for an explanation ; and we may remark that the "*furor genericus*," of which we recently spoke in relation to the last part of the 'Museum Heineanum,' is certainly not confined to this side of the Atlantic. Mr. Elliot says of *Pediœetes columbianus*, that it has "never been obtained to the east of the Mississippi." But we are assured by Mr. Sclater that this species certainly occurs in tolerable abundance on the Upper Sainte Croix, in Wisconsin : when, in September 1856, on his journey through the woods from Superior City to St. Paul, he shot and ate several examples.

Taking the circumstances under which it is produced into consideration, we think Mr. Elliot's work is most creditable to the enterprising spirit which prompts him ; and we trust no ornithologist who can afford to possess *ouvrages de luxe* will omit to secure a copy.

Our excellent friend Professor Baird is distributing the sheets of his new work* "in advance of the completion" of the book, "with the view of eliciting criticisms and suggestions from Ornithologists and Naturalists." We have received nine and a quarter of these sheets from the author ; and we need only say, now, that the work appears most fully to sustain his great reputation ; for in its present unfinished state it would be somewhat premature to give a longer notice of it ; but that it will be a most useful book to all who wish to become acquainted with American ornithology, is already very evident.

* Review of American Birds in the Museum of the Smithsonian Institution. By S. F. Baird. Part I. North and Middle America. Washington : 1864.